

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend claims 57, 64, 65, 77, 85, and 86 as follows.

1 - 56 (Cancelled)

57. (Currently Amended) An image processing system comprising:

an image processing apparatus, which combines material images to generate a mosaic image in imitation of an original image; ~~and~~

an image storage apparatus[[.]]; and

a communication channel between the image processing apparatus and the image storage apparatus;

wherein the image processing apparatus includes:

means for holding scale-down images including color information of each of a plurality of material images, wherein the scale-down images correspond respectively to the plurality of material images;

division means for dividing the original image into a plurality of blocks;

determination means for determining selected material images and their positions such that the selected material images have color information similar to color information of respective blocks divided from the original image based on the color information of each of the plurality of material images and the color information of each of the plurality of blocks; and

first output means for outputting the positions of the selected material images determined by the determination means to the image storage apparatus via the communication channel, and

wherein the image storage apparatus includes:

storage means for storing the plurality of material images; and

second output means for outputting the selected material images determined by the determination means out of the plurality of material images stored in the storage means according to the positions of the selected material images ~~determined by the determination means~~
outputted by the output means via the communication channel.

58. (Cancelled)

59. (Previously Presented) The system according to Claim 57, wherein the color information corresponding to the plurality of material images is obtained from a plurality of scale-down images or a plurality of image characteristic parameters corresponding to the plurality of material images.

60. (Previously Presented) The system according to Claim 57, wherein the image processing apparatus further includes receiving means for receiving first information corresponding to the plurality of material images from the image storage apparatus.

61. (Previously Presented) The system according to Claim 60, wherein the receiving means receives the first information corresponding to the plurality of material images during activation of the image processing system.

62. (Previously Presented) The system according to Claim 57, wherein the storage means stores the plurality of material images by dividing the plurality of material images into a plurality of groups, and the determination means determines the selected material images and their positions according to first information corresponding to a plurality of material images contained in a selected group.

63. (Previously Presented) The system according to Claim 60, wherein the receiving means receives a mosaic image generated by the first output means.

64. (Currently Amended) The system according to Claim 60, wherein the image processing apparatus receives the selected material images determined by the determination means from the image storage ~~means~~ apparatus by the receiving means and arranges the selected material images received by the receiving means according to the positions determined by the determination means to form a mosaic image.

65. (Currently Amended) The system according to Claim 57, wherein a plurality of the image processing apparatus are provided and the image storage ~~means~~ apparatus can be shared between the plurality of image processing apparatus.

66 - 76. (Cancelled)

77. (Currently Amended) An image processing apparatus that combines a plurality of material images to generate a mosaic image in imitation of an original image, comprising:

division means for dividing the original image into a plurality of blocks;

determination means for

(i) determining color information for each of the plurality of blocks divided from the original image,

(ii) determining color information for each of the plurality of material images, and

(iii) selecting one of the plurality of material images to be associated with each of the plurality of blocks divided from the original image, such that the color information of a selected one of the plurality of material images is similar to the color information of each of the plurality of blocks divided from the original image; and

first output means for outputting positions for each of the selected material images associated with each of the plurality of blocks divided from the original image to an image storage apparatus via a communication channel between the image processing apparatus and the image storage apparatus.

78. (Previously Presented) The image processing apparatus according to claim 77, further comprising means for holding scale-down images including color information of each of a plurality of material images, wherein the scale-down images correspond respectively to the plurality of material images.

79. (Previously Presented) An image processing system comprising:
an image processing apparatus according to claim 77; and
an image storage apparatus,
wherein the image storage apparatus includes:
storage means for storing the plurality of material images; and
second output means for outputting the selected material images determined by the determination means out of the plurality of material images stored in the storage means according to the positions of the selected material images determined by the determination means.

80. (Previously Presented) The image processing apparatus according to claim 77, wherein the color information corresponding to the plurality of material images is obtained from a plurality of scale-down images or a plurality of image characteristic parameters corresponding to the plurality of material images.

81. (Previously Presented) The image processing apparatus according to claim 77, further comprising receiving means for receiving first information corresponding to the plurality of material images from the image storage apparatus.

82. (Previously Presented) The image processing apparatus according to claim 81, wherein the receiving means receives the first information corresponding to the plurality of material images during activation of an image processing system.

83. (Previously Presented) The image processing system according to claim 79, wherein the storage means stores the plurality of material images by dividing the plurality of material images into a plurality of groups, and

wherein the determination means determines the selected material images and their positions according to first information corresponding to a plurality of material images contained in a selected group.

84. (Previously Presented) The image processing apparatus according to claim 81, wherein the image processing apparatus retrieves the selected material images determined by the determination means from the image storage apparatus by the receiving means and arranges the selected material images received by the receiving means according to the positions determined by the determination means to form a mosaic image.

85. (Currently Amended) The system according to Claim 79, wherein a plurality of the image processing apparatus are provided and the image storage ~~means~~ apparatus can be shared between the plurality of image processing apparatus.

86. (Currently Amended) An image processing apparatus that combines a plurality of material images to generate a mosaic image in imitation of an original image, comprising:

division means for dividing the original image into a plurality of tiles;

determination means for

(i) determining average density information for each of the plurality of tiles divided from the original image,

(ii) determining average density information to be associated with each of the plurality of material images, and

(iii) selecting one of the plurality of material images for each of the plurality of tiles divided from the original image, such that the color information of a selected one of the plurality of material images is similar to the color information of each of the plurality of tiles divided from the original image; and

first output means for outputting positions for each of the selected material images associated with each of the plurality of tiles divided from the original image to an image storage apparatus via a communication channel between the image processing apparatus and the image storage apparatus.